

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 299
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
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CINCPAC

UNCLAS SINGAPORE 2257

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, CB, SN
SUBJECT: SINGAPORE DELEGATION'S VISIT TO CAMBODIA

REF: SINGAPORE 2258

1. FOLLOWING IS COMPLETE TEXT OF STRAITS TIMES MAY 18 ARTICLE
ON GOS DELEGATION'S VISIT TO CAMBODIA, WHICH WE UNDERSTAND IS
ACCURATE ACCOUNT. SEE SEPTEL FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND
EMBASSY COMMENTS.

2. "SINGAPORE AND CAMBODIA HAVE WORKED OUT A SPECIAL
TRADING ARRANGEMENT TO BOOST BILATERAL TRADE BETWEEN
THE TWO COUNTRIES. UNDER THE ARRANGEMENT, SINGAPORE WILL BUY
FROM CAMBODIA ITEMS INCLUDING TIMBER, FISH, BRAN OIL, COFFEE,
SESAME AND FRUITS SUCH AS MANGOES, ORANGES AND LONGANS. CAMBODIA,
IN TURN, WILL BUY SINGAPORE-MADE GOODS INCLUDING INDUSTRIAL
MACHINERY, CHEMICALS, PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AND ITEMS FOR
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. ACCORDING TO INFORMED SOURCES, THE
TOTAL AMOUNT OF TRADE TO BE CARRIED OUT HAS NOT BEEN FINALIZED
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BUT PURCHASES OF CAMBODIAN GOODS WILL BE PAID THROUGH A SINGAPORE
BANK IN THE CURRENCY OF CAMBODIA'S CHOICE. THE
CURRENCY DEPOSITED WILL BE USED BY CAMBODIA TO PAY
FOR GOODS IMPORTED FROM SINGAPORE. IT IS UNDERSTOOD
THAT BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE AGREED THAT CAMBODIA
SHOULD NOT BE RESTRICTED IN THE USE OF ANY CURRENCY
DEPOSITED IN THE LOCAL BANK OF ITS CHOICE. THIS

MEANS THAT THE COUNTRY WILL BE FREE TO USE THE MONEY IN ANY WAY IT WANTS. TO FACILITATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRADING CAMBODIA AND SINGAPORE HAVE ALSO AGREED TO SET UP SHIPPING LINKS BETWEEN SINGAPORE AND KOMPONG SOM IN SOUTHERN CAMBODIA. UNDER THIS AGREEMENT, SHIPMENT OF GOODS WILL BE CARRIED OUT BY SINGAPORE'S NATIONAL SHIPPING COMPANY, NEPTUNE ORIENT LINES, OR ITS SUBSIDIARY NEPTUNE AGENCY.

"THE FIRST CONSIGNMENT OF GOODS FROM CAMBODIA IS LIKELY TO ARRIVE AFTER ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN FINALIZED BY INTRACO AND THE CAMBODIAN COMMITTEE OF TRADE. INTRACO AND THE CAMBODIAN COMMITTEE HAVE BEEN APPOINTED COORDINATORS IN THE JOINT EFFORT TO BOOST BILATERAL TRADE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. AS COORDINATOR FOR THE SINGAPORE SIDE, INTRACO WILL PURCHASE THE GOODS FOR EXPORT TO CAMBODIA AND WILL ALSO ACT AS THE IMPORTING BODY FOR CAMBODIAN GOODS INTO SINGAPORE. THESE GOODS COULD EITHER BE RE-EXPORTED OR SOLD IN THE DOMESTIC MARKET. FURTHER SINGAPORE AND CAMBODIA HAVE AGREED TO START DIRECT TELECOMMUNICATIONS LINKS. TRIAL RUNS TO CONNECT SINGAPORE WITH PHNOM PENH WILL BEGIN NEXT MONTH TO PAVE THE WAY FOR SUCH DIRECT COMMUNICATION. IT IS UNDERSTOOD UNCLASSIFIED

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THAT THE NEW TRADING ARRANGEMENT AND OTHER MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN SINGAPORE-CAMBODIAN TIES WERE WORKED OUT DURING THE LAST WEEK'S VISIT TO CAMBODIA OF A SEVEN-MEMBER SINGAPORE DELEGATION LED MR. LEE CHIONG GIAN, DIRECTOR OF THE ECONOMIC AND REGIONAL DIVISION, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THE DELEGATION ARRIVED IN PHNOM PENH ON A SPECIAL CHARTER FLIGHT LAST FRIDAY AND WAS GREETED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CAMBODIAN COMMITTEE OF TRADE, MR. VAN RIT.

"BESIDES MR. LEE, OTHER MEMBERS INCLUDED THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF INTRACO, MR. S. CHANDRA-DAS, AND OFFICIALS FROM NOL, THE TELECOMMUNICATION AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE, THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE, PRIMARY INDUSTRIES ENTERPRISES AND THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THEY HELD DETAILED AND CORDIAL TRADE DISCUSSIONS AND BOTH SIDES AGREED THAT TRADE SHOULD BE ON THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-ALIGNMENT, TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY, SOVEREIGNTY AND NON-INTERFERENCE IN EACH OTHER'S AFFAIRS. IT SHOULD ALSO BE CONDUCTED ON THE BASIS OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE

AND MUTUAL INTEREST. BEFORE ARRIVING HOME ON TUESDAY, THE SINGAPORE DELEGATION ATTENDED DINNERS GIVEN BY MR. VAN RIT AND THE CAMBODIAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, MR. IENG SARY. DURING THEIR VISIT, THE CAMBODIANS ACCORDED THE SINGAPORE TEAM WARM AND CORDIAL HOSPITALITY. SINCE THE KHMER ROUGE GOVERNMENT SWEPT INTO POWER TWO YEARS AGO, TRADE BETWEEN SINGAPORE AND CAMBODIA HAS COME TO A VIRTUAL STANDBY, WITH ONLY A SMALL TRICKLE OF BUSINESS ACTIVITY DONE THROUGH PRIVATE CHANNELS. ALTHOUGH NO OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION WAS AVAILABLE, SOURCES ESTIMATE THAT TRADE DURING THE DORMANT PERIOD AMOUNTED TO ABOUT \$200,000."

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